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# THE STAR OF THE EAST

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an ecumenical journal dealing  
specially with the oriental and  
eastern orthodox churches.

P. O. Box 98, Kottayam—686 001, Kerala, India.

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**An Ecumenical Journal dealing specially with  
the Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches.**

**SOPHIA CENTRE, ORTHODOX SEMINARY, P. B. 98,  
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## CONTENTS

	Page
1. EDITORIAL ..	3
2. THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE AND THE NICENE CREED — <i>Paulos Mar Gregorios</i> ..	7
3. THE SIN OF BEING RICH IN A POOR WORLD — <i>Geevarghese Mar Osthathios</i> ..	14
4. SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE SEARCH FOR A JUST SOCIETY—A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE — <i>Rev. Dr. K. M. George</i> ..	18
5. ORTHODOX MONASTERIES IN RUSSIA ..	28
6. NEWS AND VIEWS. ..	30



## Justice, Participation and the Gospel

Have you ever tried to define "justice"? Perhaps Roman justice can be defined, but any universal concept of justice defies definition. Some heroic and learned efforts have been recently made, especially in the west, to draw the contours of justice; but these give rise only to new controversy.

If justice were such a matter of clear and unambiguous laws and concepts, how much easier would have been the task of our judiciary and the legal profession! Legal conceptualism meets shipwreck on the shoals of social changes which often make ancient law uncouth and demand new provisions for justice in the altered set of social relations.

Justice is, in our systems, an adjudicatory process, or in simpler terms, a long drawn out process of argument, counter-argument, reflection and decision involving a number of people, principles, laws. Justice, some seem to believe, comes out of open argument and impartial evaluation of arguments. In fact, however, in our societies which are unjust, most victims of injustice have no laws in their favour, and even if there were, they have access neither to a competent advocate nor to the funds necessary to procure justice through the courts. Besides "impartial" is a quality so rare, even

in judges, who are human beings with their own passions, predilections and interests.

The judiciary as well as the legislative process as they now exist, serve only in an extremely limited way to execute justice in society. They serve mainly the property-owning class.

But the problem is perhaps in our minds. Are we right in associating justice with the judiciary and legislative processes and institutions alone? Can we legitimately hope that these processes and institutions will deliver justice some day to the whole of society?

Not so long as the distribution of power in society is itself unjust. Where does one then begin to cut into the vicious circle? If existing injustice prevents the ostensible instruments of justice from delivering that justice to all people, can a reform of these instruments be the remedy to the problem?

What do our Courts or legislative bodies do to remove the injustice of poverty and oppression in the socio-economic and political system? What *could* they do, in the absence of legislation to guarantee work, to assure a decent living to all human beings? And what is the use of such legislation, if the means of production do not develop adequately to provide full employment? And even if one had the means of production and forces of production developed to the point where it is possible to provide full employment, if these forces and means were controlled by a few to the detriment of the many as in most forms of capitalism, how can justice be ensured for the many?

The error in our minds is in associating justice with the judiciary and legislature, or even with the whole governmental process (judiciary, legislature, executive, taxation, welfare services etc.)

Justice clearly has two characteristics. First, it can never be statically defined. It is a flexible concept, which demands constant re-interpretation and reformulation. Second, there can be no true justice without participation.

### **Justice—a Dynamic Concept**

Both these affirmations have their basis in the Christian Gospel. Justice, *tsedaqah*, often translated righteousness in our English Bibles, is in essence conformity to the character and norm of God's actions, which is also the norm and standard for human behaviour. God's action or operation was most centrally and dramatically as well as definitively demonstrated in the life and work of Jesus Christ—in a continuous process of pouring out one's life for the sake

of others, especially for the poor, the lame, the sick, the disabled, the oppressed, culminating in the last great act of the Cross, and then of course leading on to Resurrection and Ascension but without triumphalism.

If we were to take this model of the life of Jesus Christ as a static definition of justice we are bound to be in error. If we were to do so, perhaps our "mission to the handicapped" would constitute the main thrust of the Christian struggle for justice—the services we can render to the blind and the lame, to the deaf and to the mongoloid and the polio-victim; the programmes to eradicate malaria and small-pox; the effort to create a world food bank as well as a seed bank; to improve labour and wage laws all over the world; and so on.

But if we are to take the view that justice is a synonym for the good, and therefore beyond permanent definition, then we are in a situation where the norms themselves undergo flux and change, in proportion to our deeper understanding of the operation of God in previous as well as present history.

Justice is the character of God. It is also the character of the "new man" created in the image of God (Eph. 4: 24)—that character of individual and society for which the blessed hunger and thirst (Mt. 5: 6); and for which they are called to suffer persecution (Mt. 5: 10—1 Pet. 3: 14). It has to exceed the legal justice of the scribes and pharisees (Mt. 5: 20). We are asked to seek the kingdom and its righteousness (Mt. 6: 33)\*

For St. Paul the justice of God is what the Gospel reveals (Rom. 1: 17); a justice (*dikaiosune*) which is independent of the law, and hence distinct from legal justice. (Gal. 2: 21; 3: 21; Phil 3: 6, Romans 3: 21). It is justice that we are asked to serve (Romans 6: 16, 19); but not the justice of the law which the people of Israel pursued (Rom. 9: 31).

Such justice cannot depend on a state system of law and power to punish; it must be a "righteousness by faith" or justice in mutual trust; a community bound together by love that is not based on contract but on commitment.

The norms of such justice are not legal codes or court procedures, but the law of love. The norm of love, like the concepts of justice and the good, also defy definitions. Love is not intangible,

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\* It is interesting to see how the concept of righteousness plays a central role in St. Matthew's version of the Sermon on the Mount, but not in St. Luke's.

it is our deepest experience; and yet it cannot be structured or reduced to codes of external behaviour.

The instrument of the state or the political machine can be a helpful instrument in the pursuit of true justice, true love and righteousness and holiness; or as is often the case, it can be a hindrance. When it is a hindrance, one has to fight it. But fighting and changing the political machinery will not bring about justice, as we have experienced time and again here in Kerala. Unfortunately most of our Christian prophetic energies are wasted in criticizing the ruling government and not in working at the foundations.

### **Participation as an Essential Element in Justice**

Justice cannot be handed to the victims of injustice on a platter. It has to be struggled and striven for. It can be proclaimed, but must yet be claimed and appropriated by the victims. Without participation there cannot be justice, for justice is a community affair. Our present mistake is in limiting the community character of justice to the parliamentary community as far as legislation is concerned, and to the judicial community as far as adjudication is concerned.

Only wider participation in a process of continuing discussion can ensure full participation and constant reinterpretation. It is not enough to point out injustices perpetrated by peoples' courts. The people will have to learn to judge the peoples' courts also, with a keen discerning sense for the demands of justice.

All this is not to express the utopian view that "law-less" just society is within easy reach. The power of evil is something real to be reckoned with; but this power should not be so exaggerated as to let people drift into cynicism. Perhaps evils cannot be tackled piecemeal; but they must be tackled, from the roots up. Evil is not that powerful; many forms of it will collapse when the people advance in the spirit of justice. The kingdom has come, is coming and will come. The final fulfilment may be beyond history; but history itself cannot be the antithesis of its own transcendent fulfilment.



# **The Council of Constantinople and the Nicene Creed**

Its 16th Centenary this year.

**(Paulos Mar Gregorios)**

The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed is the only recognized official Creed of the Christian Church (the Athanasian Creed or the Apostle's Creed does not enjoy the same status in the Church, nor do the later "confessions" of the Reformed Churches). It was finally adopted, more or less in its present form in 381 AD, at the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople.

Convened by the Emperor Theodosius in order to overcome the remnants of Arianism in the Church and to reunite the Church on the basis of the Creed of Nicea (325 A. D.), the Council of Constantinople nevertheless had virtually no representation from the West. It is recognized as the Second Ecumenical Council, even by the western churches, despite their absence there.

St. Basil, who was generally opposed to the idea of holding Councils on the ground that they always led to new quarrels, had died on January 1, 379 before he was 50. Emperor Theodosius now recalled all the Orthodox bishops who had been sent into exile by the Arians. The Emperor was young, and was baptized after he became Emperor, by an ardent Nicene Bishop by the name Acholius. It was his desire as a neophyte Christian that the Empire should have a united Church. On February 27, 380 he issued a decree that all Christians should hold the same faith which "the Apostle Peter had taught to the Romans, and which was now followed by Damasus, Bishop of Rome and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, a man of Apostolic sanctity (See Codex Theodosianus XVI: 1, 2). Antioch could not be cited as a standard then because the Church there was already in schism, between the Great Church of Meletius and the Little Church of Paulinus. Neither could Constantinople be cited, since the Arian party was too strong there, and its leader, Demophilus was Bishop of Constantinople, contested by the Orthodox.

In 379, after St. Basil had departed St. Gregory Nazianzen was the outstanding theologian-bishop, and he was invited to become bishop of Constantinople. He reluctantly accepted, and set up the

small Church of Anastasia, in opposition to St. Sophia where the Arians ruled under Demophilus.

St. Gregory's spotless character and unparalleled eloquence combined with deep knowledge and sanctity rallied the Christians back to the Nicene faith. The Arians were furious and attacked physically the little Church of the Resurrection (Anastasia), throwing stones at people in the Church at Easter while they were baptizing new Christians. They not only attacked St. Gregory, but also dragged him to Court as the instigator of the violence.

Emperor Theodosius took the Church of Constantinople (St. Sophia) and handed it back to the Orthodox. On November 26th, 380, he personally conducted St. Gregory Nazianzen to take over the Church of St. Sophia. The Arians tried to demonstrate against this, but the Emperor's army kept them under control. The day was clouded; heavy rain was expected. The interior of St. Sophia was dark and unlighted. As the Emperor and St. Gregory marched into the Church, and took their respective imperial and episcopal thrones, the clouds disappeared, the sun shone through and the crowd shouted "Gregorios episcopos, axios". Gregory the orator, did not make a speech, but silently mounted the steps to begin the celebration of the Eucharistic mysteries.

The saintly bishop sought to reform the Church of Sophia, but found too many obstacles in the form of vested interests. There was an attempt at assassination of the bishop. But by sheer force of character and the power of saintliness, St. Gregory overcame all enemies.

It was in this situation that the Emperor Theodosius called together the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople. (The Byzantines call this the First Council of Constantinople, because they recognize the second and third Councils of Constantinople held in 553 and 680 respectively. The Oriental Orthodox do not recognize these two Councils as ecumenical).

Who were present at this great Council of Constantinople 1600 years ago? We know some details. Meletius, Bishop of Antioch, came with 70 bishops from the "Diocese" of the "Orient" which at that time comprised some six provinces of the Roman Empire (but not Persia or India). Helladius, the successor of St. Basil at Caesarea, came with the two brothers of St. Basil, Bishop St. Gregory of Nyssa and Bishop St. Peter of Sebaste. Some 50 bishops who came from Sothern Asia Minor, were also supporters of the Cappadocians. Some 150 bishops signed the decree.

St. Basil though departed, was the moving spirit behind the Council of Constantinople. Few Arian bishops dared come; or perhaps they were not invited. But there was a group of 36 bishops who belonged to the Semi-Arian or *homoiousion* (as distinct from *homoousion*) position, or a Macedonian (denying the deity of the Holy Spirit) position.

They met at St. Sophia. On May 16th, on the Feast of Pentecost, St. Gregory Nazianzen preached his famous homily on the Holy Spirit seeking to correct the errors of the Semi-Arians and the Macedonians who had fought St. Basil's orthodoxy.

The Macedonians who do not respect the Deity of the Holy Spirit, and who were like many western theologians, binitarian rather than trinitarian in their faith, refused to acknowledge the Orthodox position. The Church decided to rule out the Macedonian heresy and other prevailing heresies like *anomoianism* and *apollinarianism*. Canon 1 re-affirms the faith of the 318 Fathers who assembled at Nicea, but we have difficulty in ascertaining the precise text which was approved by the Council of Constantinople 56 years after Nicea, with its own additions and amendments. We have the text of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed as cited by the Council of Chalcedon in 451 in the minutes of that Council; we can only assume that the drafters at Chalcedon had a text of the decree of Constantinople before them.

Its most controversial decision came in Canon III, which is brief, but extremely significant, and still constitutes a major ecumenical problem:

“The Bishop of Constantinople, however, shall have the prerogative of honour (*ta presbeia tes times*) after the Bishop of Rome, because Constantinople is New Rome”.

This Canon III is ecumenically controversial for several reasons:

1. This was clearly intended as a rebuff to the Alexandrians and the Antiocheans, who had the second and third ranks in the protocol of the Church. To put Constantinople ahead of both Alexandria and Antioch was a violation of the Nicene protocol, and is still not accepted by the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

2. It was also unacceptable to the West. The Roman Church does not acknowledge Canon III of Constantinople, not because it violates the Nicene protocol, but rather on account of its implications for the basis of the Primacy of Rome. If Constantinople is “New Rome”, then it is clear that its claim to that status is based on the fact that it is the new imperial Capital. This implies that the claim of the Old Rome to primacy is based on the civil fact of that city

being first in imperial protocol as the first imperial City. This is not what the Church of Rome claims. They derive the primacy of Rome and contend for it on ecclesiastical and theological grounds, not on a civil protocol basis.

This is a major issue between Roman Catholics, Byzantine Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox, and the Oriental Orthodox alone insist on the Nicene Protocol as being fundamental—i. e. Rome first, Alexandria second, Antioch third, Jerusalem fourth and then Constantinople. This is based on historical factors of imperial protocol, and does have ecclesial sanction only on the ground of the Nicene decree.

But the Oriental Orthodox as well as the Roman Catholics have to answer the question: "If you accept the Nicene decree, should you not also accept the decree of the Council of Constantinople which you acknowledge as ecumenical?" And that answer is difficult.

Rome does today accept the Patriarchate of Constantinople as second in rank, but only after they had founded a Latin Patriarchate there in 1204. The twelfth general Council in the Roman Church (1215) formally acknowledged the second rank of Constantinople, but not on the basis of Canon III of Constantinople, which they cannot acknowledge without compromising their official theological basis for the Roman primacy. Pope Leo's delegate even declared at the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD—70 years later) that this Canon III of Constantinople had not even been communicated to them. This may not have been actually the case, but Leo saw the implications of this Canon for his own claims to primacy.

Alexandria also contested this decision of Constantinople. At Constantinople (381) Alexandria was in disfavour with the Emperor Theodosius because of the shameful affair of Maximus the Cynic whom Peter of Alexandria had tried to put on the episcopal throne of Constantinople.

It is difficult to say who presided at Constantinople. It was certainly not the Bishop of Rome or his delegate, for neither was present. It seems Meletius of Antioch presided first; then when Nectarius was consecrated as Bishop of Constantinople in place of Gregory Nazianzen who had left St. Sophia in disgust before completing a year, it was Nectarius of Constantinople rather than Timothy of Alexandria who presided. St. Gregory of Nyssa also seems to have presided over certain sessions. Rome and the west were virtually absent at this Council, and played no great role at it. Despite this fact, the Western Church of Rome fully acknowledged this Council as an ecumenical Council. But this took time.

At first the Latins objected to two of the Council's decisions—they did not approve (a) the recognition given to Meletius of Antioch who was a schismatic for them and (b) the consecration and recognition of Nectarius as Bishop of Constantinople, and the deposition of Maximus the Cynic.

The Synod had therefore to reassemble in 382 (See Hefele, *History of the Councils*, Vol: II pp. 370ff) at Constantinople, and having considered the disputation of the Latins, re-affirmed the decisions of the Council of 381 as ecumenical (*oikoumenike*). Pope Damasus then acknowledged the decision on the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, but not the decisions on Canonical matters. His successor, especially Leo and Gregory also approved only the credal definition but not the canonical decisions.

The status of the Council of Constantinople remained uncertain for some time after. Ephesus (431) affirms Nicea and its creed, but says nothing about the Council of Constantinople. Even Ephesus (449) convened by Dioscorus and referred to by the West as 'Robber Synod' mentions only two ecumenical Councils—Nicea 325 and Ephesus 431, but not Constantinople 381. In fact the 449 Synod calls Ephesus 431 the Second Synod (*he deutera synodos*).

Constantinople 381 gets its full recognition only at Chalcedon in 451, where it was solemnly recognized as the second ecumenical Council.

### Its Significance Today

The 16th centenary of the Council of Constantinople was celebrated with special solemnity by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople from June 5th to 7th this year. This is not difficult to understand, because the importance of Constantinople and its overshadowing of Alexandria and Antioch begins with this Council.

On the other hand, 381 was also the beginning of a growing rift between Constantinople and the other primatial sees. Rome was already being marginalized, and Pope Leo was soon to react vigorously to assert its own primacy. Alexandria kept fighting Constantinople, often with means and methods not qualitatively different from some of the worst of Byzantine intrigues. The Condemnation of Nestorius (who was Bishop of Constantinople) in 431 and the leading role played by Cyril of Alexandria in that condemnation, have to be seen in this context of Alexandrian-Byzantine hostility. Even the silver-tongued ascetic John Chrysostom (Bishop of Constantinople 398-407) was not free from the mean attacks of Theophilus of

Alexandria, who had the audacity to condemn the bishop of Constantinople on 29 charges, many of them false.

Antioch on the other hand, was divided in its attitude to Constantinople. The majority of Christians in the city of Antioch being Greeks were pro-Byzantine while the Syriac-speaking group of the city along with the Syriac-speaking people of the Syrian provinces were intensely anti-Byzantine.

Constantinople prospered at the expense of Antioch. At the end of the 4th century, the domain of the Patriarch of Antioch extended over a wide area. Apart from Antioch, the third city of the Empire and residence of many Emperors, the whole 'diocese' of the East, which comprised at least six Roman provinces—was largely Syriac-speaking and anti-hellenistic and anti-Latin. At the Council of Constantinople the Metropolitan sees were redefined—Antioch becoming simply one of the eight in the East (Alexandria, Jerusalem, Cyprus, Antioch, Caesarea in Cappadocia, Constantinople, Thessalonica, Sirmium).

If Islam were later to sweep through most of these eight Metropolitanates of the East as well as through the Persian empire, part of the reason was the anti-hellenism and anti-latinism of the Asian and African peoples, which first expressed itself through the opposition to Chalcedon and then later to Christianity itself as a Graeco-Roman religion of domination.

Constantinople and Chalcedon, at least for the Asian-African peoples, became the symbol of Melchitism or compromise with the domination by imperial Byzantine hellenistic civil and cultural forces. As Henri Marrou says:

“From the purely religious point of view it is certain that a theology suffers as well as gains from the protection accorded it by an oppressive power with its army and police. The Chalcedonian Melchite Church depended too closely on such a power not to appear quite often as an over-official Church too tied to the world, in some sense part of the civil service. The bishops on the whole were too inclined to follow the fluctuations of religious policy adopted in the Palace of Constantinople” (J. Danielou & H. Marrou, *The Christian Centuries*, Vol: I, Dartman Longman & Todd, London, 1964, p. 355).

Neither Henri Marrou nor the present writer wants to raise the bogey of Caesaropapism, a charge too grossly oversimplified to be worth pursuing. The genius of Eastern Christianity lay rather in the

resistance to Byzantine imperial authority—on the part of the Cappadocians and St. John Chrysostom first, and then by a vast mass of Asian-African Christians.

The imperial power of Byzantium which began to assert itself ecclesiastically with the Council of Constantinople in 381 is no longer here today in 1981. But the wounds and scars of that period remain a crucial issue, not simply for the unity of the Church today, but also for the unity of humanity. For behind the negative animus of the Arab world against the Graeco-Latin West lie the significant developments of fourth and fifth century Church history.

Perhaps the best we can do on the 16th centenary of the Council of Constantinople is to begin a restudy of 4th and 5th century Church history, as a basis for the settlement of the conflict between Asian-African and European-American peoples today.

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# The Sin of Being Rich in a Poor World

(Geevarghese Mar Osthathios)

It is with real enjoyment that I read the address of Mr. Raymon Fung, Director of the Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee at the Bossey CWME Consultation which has been reprinted in the NCC Review of June—July, 1981. The whole emphasis of the paper he read is on “the sinned against”—To quote, “I would like to stress that for the purpose of evangelism, the fundamental reality of a person is that he or she sins and is sinned against. If evangelism seeks to speak to the very depth of a person through the proclamation of the Gospel, evangelism must recognise that a person is an object of sin as well as a subject of sin.” (NCC Review, p. 326). I would like to follow up his ideas by pointing out that we the members of the middle class and the upper class are sinning against the lowest class, which we call the poor, the exploited, the jobless, the unwanted, the refugees and even the naxalites. By sinning against them, we are increasing their sins as well as our sins.

The universality and depth of sin are taught by St. Paul in a number of his Epistles, especially Romans 1—7. “For there is no distinction ; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift.....” (Rom. 3: 22ff). Again, “What then ? Are we Jews any better off ? No, not at all ; for I have already charged that all men, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, as it is written : “None is righteous, no, not one ; no one understands, no one seeks for God. All have turned aside, together they have gone wrong ; no one does good, not even one” (3: 9—11).

St. Paul does not seem to deal with the question of greater and lesser sin, individual and social sin. It is our Lord who goes into the greater sin of those who cause others to sin. “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world for temptations to sin ! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the man by whom the temptation comes” (Mt. 18: 5—7). Every sin has vertical, interior and horizontal dimensions. Even the so-called private or secret sin makes the person concerned gloomy, alienated from God, oneself and fellowman. Of course, it is God alone who can judge ultimately about the degree of one's sin.



However, the sin of the sinner and the sin of the tempter are to be distinguished. The sin of Satan who tempted Eve is greater than the sin of Eve who fell. Hence the children of the fallen Adam and Eve can be saved, but Satan cannot be saved? Origen's teaching that Satan will also be ultimately be saved was condemned by the Church. The sin against the Holy Spirit is that of seeing with the eyes of Beelzebub and calling light darkness and the Son of Man Beelzebub. The rich or poor who repent of their sin are not committing the sin against the Holy Spirit, but those who feel they are not sinners are callous and so the light of God cannot penetrate to their hearts and so they cannot be saved. The oppressing structures and the oppressed are sinful, but the structures are more demonic than the people who succumb to the structure. The Churches of the world are not adequately conscious of the social and structural sin as of personal sins.

Conscientization of the rich and the poor must be hastened by a deeper level of teaching about the sin of being rich in a poor world, the sin of selfishness in the accumulation of wealth, in the patenting of beneficial scientific discoveries, in the luxurious life-style of a few in a world of poverty and in the unwillingness to share God-given resources with others.

Why is it a sin to be rich in a poor world?

(i) **Theism and Humanism**: A practising Christian has to be a theist as well as a humanist. Theism without humanism is irrelevant and humanism without theism is shallow. All noble religions will agree to the utopian and yet desirable dictum of "the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of humanity." If this motto is to be meaningful, the Heavenly Father's wealth will be shared by all His children. The double commandment to love God wholly and the neighbour as oneself implies that my neighbour is my brother and that both are one in solidarity. Even in this fallen order, the earthly father who has one rich son and another poor son will do his utmost to see that the poor brother is benefitted by the talents of the rich brother. There are certain families in Kerala in which all the brothers, sisters and their life-partners are in the Persian gulf states with well-paid jobs. The Fatherhood of God is mere jargon if this brotherhood is not practised widely. Religious leaders must at least teach this ideal to the faithful. Rich parishioners must feel it their bounden duty to see that there are no poor people in the vicinity of the parish and that they are committing a sin when they do not share their wealth with the needy brothers. This sharing is not to make the poor parasites, but to help them to help themselves. Though the Parsee Community has this ideal of sharing, they do it only to their co-religionists and ethnic people. This is communalism and not real humanism.

(ii) **Trinitarian Theism** : The uniqueness of Christianity is its inclusive monotheism which is also implied in faith in the Holy Trinity. God is Eternal love in eternal action which means distinction and equality in divine freedom. God is Absolute Freedom, Perfect Love in co-equality, co-eternity, and co-essentiality. Analogically and apologetically speaking, God is an Eternal Family of Eternal Father, Eternal Son and Eternal Mother, and yet One Family of Three Persons in one ousia. It is this God who combines in Himself Unity and Plurality in the free sharing of love which may be theologically called *perichoresis* or circumincession. A sharing humanity will never emerge by the worship of a Monad God of Jehovah of the O. T. or Allah of the Holy Quran or Advaita of Sankaracharya. The curse of capitalism is its individualism which in turn is mere verticality of "God and I" without the horizontality of "My brother and Me". One who worships God is emulating Him unconsciously. Trinitarian worship, if mere worship, without sharing life is a bifurcation of life and worship. Humanity will move towards a sharing society when the meaning of Holy Trinity is preached as a model for life, to be perfected in eternity, and yet started in the earthly life itself. "God above God" as Paul Tillich terms it is not Nirguna Brahma, but the Holy Trinity of eternal and perfect love. Any rich man or woman who worships the Holy Trinity has no justification to remain selfish and rich in a poor world. He will share everything to create an egalitarian, brotherly, and sisterly world of freedom and justice.

(iii) **Compassionate Ethic** : As Baron von Hugel pointed out, "Christianity taught us to care". Caring is the essence of the Christian ethic. But it is more than caring for one's blood relations or immediate neighbours. The compassion of the Good Samaritan went out to one outside his community. Compassion is a mental attitude of one who truly follows Christ whereby one is incapable of rejoicing when the neighbour is weeping and incapable of crying when the neighbour is rejoicing (Rom. 12: 15). Hence it is almost impossible for a Christian to be rich when the neighbour is poor and jealous when the neighbour is rich. The rich nations think that the poor nations are jealous of their prosperity when they claim a rightful share of the wealth of the world. This is a misunderstanding. Was St. Mary, the mother of our Lord jealous when she sang in the magnificat of God who "has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of a low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away?" (Lk. 1: 52ff). She was prophesying of the tremendous revolution that the Incarnation would bring about in the world. Due to the change of heart of the rich and the poor, the rich will come down for the poor to come up and there will be a compassionate world redeemed by Christ in which there will be only brothers and

sisters and not the rich and the poor. It is incompatible with any one's true spirituality to accommodate a world of the rich and the poor just on the basis of one verse, "the poor shall always be among you". That verse is taken from Deut 15, where a previous verse reads, "But there will be no poor among you if only you will obey the voice of the Lord" (Verse 4ff). The voice of the Lord in us will tell us to be compassionate and so we will not be rich when others are poor.

(iv) **A new source of joy** : When the seventy returned with joy in their manifested authority to cast out demons, Jesus told them to "rejoice that their names are written in heaven" (Lk 10: 20). The rich who are unredeemed rejoice in their authority, wealth, power, material and physical cause of pleasure, but the redeemed have a permanent pleasure principle, namely their eschatological hope which gives them joy right here on earth also. Jesus asked not only the rich young ruler, but also the little flock to sell their possessions and give alms. "Provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys" (Lk. 12: 32ff). The tragedy of the rich in particular is that they do not take life beyond seriously like the rich man in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The very clear lesson from the parable is that one cannot be rich here and rich in eternity. It is only a worldly person who can enjoy luxuries on earth without any prick of conscience when the neighbour is in dire need. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also". In other words, where your heart is, there will your treasure be also". The parents give their wealth to their children as their hearts are in them. Those who have hearts set on God and the poor will give their treasure for the poor to be reaped in eternity. It is a sin to be materially rich and spiritually poor, historically rich and eternally poor.

Our task then is to recognize that capitalism as a selfish system should be discarded as slavery was discarded long ago and a just economic order and a better political structure of social justice must be evolved as early as possible. "Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere."

# Spiritual Foundations of the Search for a Just Society—A Christian Perspective\*

—Rev. DR. K. M. GEORGE

## Introduction

‘Spirituality and justice in society’ is a theme which can be approached from many different angles even within a single religious tradition. My own perspective is shaped more or less by my Eastern Christian upbringing and understanding.

The Eastern Christian Tradition does not make any arbitrary separation between spirituality and theology although such a distinction is conventionally made, perhaps for academic reasons, in the Christian tradition, of the West. Prayer, meditation, fasting and other forms of spiritual *askesis*<sup>1</sup> are constitutive elements of an authentic theological vision. Therefore to speak of the spiritual foundations of a just society is really to speak of its theological foundations. Very often in Christian circles spirituality is associated with monastic practices<sup>2</sup>. Although this association has some historical basis, it should be remembered that the monastic movement arose only at a relatively late period in the historical life of the Christian Church and that it is not considered to be a permanent and inevitable feature of the life of the Church. Thus the words ‘spiritual’ and ‘spirituality’ are understood here in their broad and

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\* This paper was originally presented at a Hindu-Christian dialogue meeting sponsored by the WCC, held at Rajpur, Dehra Dun, June, 1981.

1. *Askesis* is a Greek word from which is derived the English word ‘ascetic.’ *Askesis* originally had no ‘ascetic’ overtones, but it simply meant *abhyasa* and implies disciplined exercise or training of body, mind and spirit. A monastery is called an *asketerion* a place for training.
2. See for example, L. Bouyer, *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers*, London, Burns and Oates, 1963. The major theme of such a book is the monastic spirituality.

inclusive sense which is integral to the theological vision and the totality of the life of the Christian Church.

This paper does not attempt to make a close analysis of the notion of a 'just society.' Since injustice is the daily experience of sensitive human beings everywhere, the yearning for justice is universal. Apparently there is some sort of a common consensus as to what a just society would look like, though people differ as to the means and models of justice. Bishop Paul Gregorios refers to two kinds of consciousness being developed today 'among those who are yearning for a just society: One is that of a society which is structurally just, with justice enforced by law, implemented by the state. The other, less clearly articulated, is a utopian vision, with very little law and structure and consumption, but with much joy, much spontaneous community with human relations in love more important than goods and property, with government and state playing a minor role, where people are directly involved in the movement to create a new humanity...<sup>3</sup>'

In recent years, there has been a great deal of talk about structural injustice. There are local, national and international structures which perpetuate injustice and oppression. Whatever be the form of injustice, the world community is directly or indirectly affected. One significant aspect of recent discussions is that the locus of justice or injustice is being shifted from the individual human basis to the human community at large. It does not mean that the individual is ignored, but that he is seen in his wider and complex relationship to human society. The question of justice is inevitably a social question. The social dimension ranges from a local village community to global levels. To many who would think that spirituality is primarily an individual affair, this creates a problem. How could our spiritual practices which are associated with the individual believer be related to the question of social justice which is irreducibly associated with the human community?

### **The Vertical and the Horizontal**

The Christian Church in all ages had experienced the conflict of interest between those who consider the vertical dimension between God and individual human being primary and those who consider the horizontal relationship of man-to-man primary. In our times several significant groups of radical Christians who are burning with the prophetic zeal for justice have opted for overt political and

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3. "To Proclaim Liberation: a Biblical Meditation on the Jubilee Year" in Richard Dickinson (ed). *To Set at Liberty the Oppressed*, W. C. C., Geneva, 1975 p. 192.

economic action. For them the worship of God is performed in their active participation in the struggles of the oppressed and the exploited masses. The traditional spiritual discipline does not appeal to them. They would criticise that the traditional spirituality in spite of all its merits, has not been successful in bringing about substantial structural changes in the world where the powerful systematically oppressed the powerless. There are prayers for the poor and the destitute in all Christian books of worship. Generally speaking, the liturgical texts resist change. The radical Christians would take for example, the printed and unchanging prayer for the poor as a sign of the attitude of the Church nourished by the conventional spirituality to retain the status quo, not willing to bring about any change in the existing social and economic patterns. They would perhaps qualify their own spirituality as a "spirituality for combat." In the words of David Jenkins: "Perhaps what Christians are particularly called to work out.....is what might be called a spirituality for combat. Can our very struggles become part of our celebration of man as we understand him, in the image of God and died for by the Son of God? How might we help one another to so conduct our struggles that they become part of our worship."<sup>4</sup>

People who emphasize the vertical dimension have equally strong arguments. For them spirituality is primarily concerned with God and the individual soul. All concern for others should be consequent to the spiritual experience of the soul anchored in God. They do not make an outright repudiation of social action, though they suspect that radical social action is rather superficial, lacking in depth and sustainability. For them the predominant concern is the cultivation of the soul in silence and in obedience to the Word of God. Everything else proceeds from this.

These two divergent tendencies are not new in the Church. As early as in the 3rd and 4th centuries the fathers of the Church debated the relationship between *theoria* and *praxis*, contemplation and practical action. Their general consensus was that these are not

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4. David Jenkins, quoted by M. M. Thomas in "The Report of the Moderator of the Central Committee" in *Breaking Barriers: Nairobi* 1975. Geneva, 1976, p. 240.

contradictory, but complementary to each other<sup>5</sup>. *Theoria* and *praxis* are integrally related to each other. Any radical polarization between them as we sometimes find in the history of the Church, is detrimental to the message of the Gospel. In a sane triangular God—World—Man relationship individual spiritual aspirations and concerns of social justice interact in a creative way.

### The Alone to the Alone

It is to be admitted that most of the early Christian writers who lived in the Greek cultural matrix in the 4th and 5th centuries were influenced by the then predominant Neoplatonic spirituality. The influence is clearly visible in the great spiritual masters like Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzen, Dionysius the Areopagite and others in the East and Augustine of Hippo in the West. The central feature of the Neoplatonic spirituality associated with the life and teachings of Plotinus (3rd Century), was “the flight of the Alone to the Alone” (*monos pros monon*). It was an extremely individualistic spirituality though of very high quality. The goal of ascetic discipline was the sudden and ecstatic illumination of the noblest element in man, i. e. his all-controlling rational faculty, the *nous*. Knowledge (*gnosis*) of the ultimate reality when the God-like in man, the *nous*, becomes one with God. The only major obstacle in this process of *nous* becoming God-like is the carnal body. So the material body and matter in general were condemned as a prison which imprisoned the spirit and hindered its progress in the path towards complete union with the *To On*. That Which Is, the True Being. This spirituality was by its own inner logic a-social and anti-world. Plotinus and the spiritual tradition he created were totally indifferent to the world and its material problems. *Theoria* was highlighted at the expense of socio-political *praxis*.

### Towards Life in Community

It was quite natural that many high minded and spiritually earnest Christian teachers fell under the spell of the Neoplatonic

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5. For example, the works of St. Gregory Nazianzen a 4th cent. theologian with a heavy penchant for contemplative life are full of references to the interrelationship between *theoria* and *praxis*. There is an idea of sacred communion which is behind the Greek notion of *theoria*. *Theoros* is originally one who is sent to take part in a solemn sacred act as a spectator, and he thus acquires a sacred quality. *Theoria* is real sharing and the *theoros* is totally involved in and swept away by what he sees. See G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*.

spirituality which manifested rigorous ascetic discipline and promised astounding spiritual illumination. They, however, were not swept away because of a counter vailing force which their Christian upbringing provided. That was the force of the community called the Church. Christian faith was never understood apart from a community of believers. The Christian monastic movement arose in the 3rd century first in the form of anchoritism—individual Christians searching for solitude and seclusion in the desert in order to enter into communion with God. But soon the sense of the community reasserted itself, and a cenobitic or community style of life was started by spiritual masters like Pachomius in the Egyptian desert. Later men like St. Basil of Caesarea (4th cent.) in the East and Saint Benedict (6th cent.) in the West organized the monastic communities under common rules. The rule of Basil and the rule of Benedict became famous models for the later generation of monks. The basic inspiration of these rules is a concept of the Church as the community of believers in Christ. They maintained that spiritual discipline should necessarily be exercised in a community. The total seclusion of pure anchoritism does not produce any sane spirituality. One's commitment to one's fellow human beings is constitutive of one's relationship with God. Even the rule of 20th cent. protestant monastic community of Taize in France admirably betrays the sense of the community as fundamental to any serious Christian spirituality. The Rule of Taize begins thus:

“Brother, if you submit to a common rule, you can do so only for the sake of Christ and the Gospel.”

Henceforth your worship and your service take place in a community of brothers, within the body of the Church. Common impulse will stimulate your interior discipline which is so essential for your life as a Christian. From now on you are no longer alone. In all things you must take your brothers into account.”<sup>6</sup>

Antony, the father of the monastic movement was a solitary monk in the Egyptian desert who was convinced of his mission to the human community. In one of the oldest of monastic texts, *Vita Antonii* (Life of Antony) the author describes the appearance of Antony the monk and the way he dealt with his fellow human beings:

“Antony came out, as one initiated into the mysteries, in the secret of the temple and inspired by a divine breath ..Through him the Lord healed many persons suffering in their bodies and purified others of demons. Antony had received from God the grace of

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6. *The Rule of Taize*, 196 p. 9f,



consoling the afflicted, of reconciling men at odds with one another. He told them to esteem nothing in the world more than the love of God.”<sup>7</sup>

These examples illustrate how the elements of an individualistic spirituality were mellowed down to form a spirituality in community. The issue of justice and injustice emerges here. Justice in the community becomes the deep concern of a spirituality in community.

### A Community of Love and Justice

The earliest Christian community which met in Jerusalem to share the resurrection experience of Christ was a worshipping community which implemented absolute economic justice among its members. However, this community was not economically viable, because it was a ‘consumer society’ without any idea of labour and production and soon faced a serious resource depletion. “And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts praising God and having favour with all men” (Acts. 2: 44-47).

However, soon injustice crept into this spiritual society which had achieved a very high level of social justice. Here injustice took the form of racial discrimination: “Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number the Greeks murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution” (Acts 6: 1). It is true that the Apostles devised some means to deal with the question of discrimination in the community.

In spite of the economic failure of this community and the presence of evil and injustice in its midst, the Jerusalem community has ever since been a source of inspiration and guidance to Christian communities everywhere in the world. The famous Benedictine rule of *ora et labora* was an intelligent modification of the principle adopted by the Jerusalem community. Not only worship and just distribution of resources, but hard work for the community as well. These three elements together guaranteed the sustainability of the communities.

## Church the Body of Christ

St. Paul's predominant idea of the Church as the Body of Christ had a decisive influence on Christian spirituality in its relation to justice in society. Christ is the head of the body of which we are all members (Rom. 12: 4-5; I Cor. 12: 12, 26). No member is insignificant in the total make up of the body. Every member shares the same life of Christ with all others, although everyone has his particular function in the body. The body becomes a meaningful whole through the mutual concern and harmony of the individual members.

The Body of Christ does not simply designate an exclusive earthly society. It includes in its large dimensions the whole created order, the living and the departed, man and nature, terrestrial and celestial creations. St. Paul convinced of the depth of this reality calls it 'the mystery of the Church. Justice, participation and mutual sustenance are the signs of the mystery of the body of Christ.

## The Liturgical Spirituality

It is this idea of the Body of Christ which generated the Christian liturgical spirituality which lies behind all expressions of spirituality whether monastic or non-monastic. The Eucharistic liturgy in which the bread and wine, symbolic products of human labour on earth, are offered through Jesus Christ to the Creator God in a deep sense of thankfulness (*eucharistia*) lies at the core of Christian spirituality. Christians believe that they receive back the gifts they have offered to God as the life-giving body and blood of Christ who gave away his life on the Cross for the whole world. All believers share the same cup and the same bread. Those who share the same cup are brothers and sisters to each other. This is the potential Christian source for any consideration of justice in society.

## Prayer, Intercession, Fasting etc.

Christian Prayer is never understood in isolation from the community and its liturgy though many Christian theologians especially in the West continue to say that "prayer is an exchange between God and soul."<sup>8</sup> In this act of dialogue the only partners are the individual I and the divine Thou. But no authentic teacher of Christian spirituality has limited prayer to this dialogue relationship. Prayer becomes meaningful only when it is open to the other, as well. Saint Seraphim of Sarov, a 19th cent. Russian saint was

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8. Von Balthassar, *On Prayer*, London, 1957, p. 12.

well aware of this when he says: "Acquire inner peace (through the prayer), and a multitude of human beings will find their salvation through you."<sup>9</sup> The ascetic group called the Messalians in the age of Egyptian monasticism was condemned by the Church, because they so much emphasized the magnificent individual spiritual experience that they ignored the common life and the Eucharistic liturgy and service of the world.

Intercession has been assigned a large place in Christian liturgy. Prayers are offered on behalf of the sick and the suffering, the oppressed and the persecuted, widows and orphans, the poor and the hungry, rulers and governments etc. Intercession was the great work of Christ. "Intercession is not primarily an expression of human piety. Its real significance can only be grasped in the light of Christ's own intercession. Whenever we pray for others we are in essence simply continuing what Christ did for us."<sup>10</sup> The concern for justice has a potential source in the act of intercession. Those who pray daily for the victims of injustice and oppression should be drawn into concrete action and planning to root out injustice in society.

Fasting and abstinence are an important aspect of spiritual discipline especially in the Eastern Christian Tradition. As it is understood in almost all religious traditions fasting and abstinence help us bring the body and senses under control. But this is not an end in itself. It is simply a means to enter into higher levels of spiritual communion with God and with fellow human beings. Bodily discipline prepares us for sublime heights of prayer. "Prayer is full of love"; says a lenten prayer of the Orthodox Church, "if love does not raise it up, the wings of prayer are weak." The wings of prayer are love and justice. Another prayer for the lent period says, "The body and spirit together should take fast. When the body abstains from food, the spirit should abstain from evil. If the spirit does not renounce evil thoughts, bodily abstinence from food is totally meaningless." Feeding of the hungry and liberation of the oppressed are constant themes in the prayers during 50 days of fasting and abstinence preceding Easter, the feast of the resurrection of Christ. Another recurrent theme is the prophetic call for justice in the Book of Isaiah: "Behold in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers."

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9. Paul Evdokimov, *Les ages de la vie spirituelle*, Paris, 1970, p. 191.

10. Lukas Vischer, *Intercession*, Geneva 1980, p. 5.

“Behold you fast only to quarrel and fight.....

Is not this the fast that I choose;  
to loose the bonds of wickedness,  
to undo the bonds of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,  
and bring the homeless poor into your house,  
when you see the naked, to cover him,  
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?” (Isa. 58: 3-7)

The idea that individual spiritual discipline is exclusively meant for one's own salvation is alien to Christian tradition, though time and again Christian spirituality has manifested deplorable signs of extremely individualistic soul saving business. Many Christians have often misunderstood the techniques of spiritual discipline as an end in themselves. Cassian, one of the great 5th cent. spiritual masters says: “Our fastings, our vigils, meditation on scripture, poverty and the privation of all things are not perfection, but the instruments for acquiring it.”<sup>11</sup>

### Prophetic Spirituality

Traditional Christian spirituality has sometimes shown the tendency to passivity. This passivity and silent obedience to the structures of the institutional church are most obvious in some schools of monastic spirituality. Contemplative life was often identified with passive existence in contrast to the active life in the world. However, it should be remembered that the spiritual ministry of Christ was inaugurated with his reading in the Synagogue of Nazareth the passage from Prophet Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up, the broken hearted,

to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” (Lk. 4: 18-19, Is. 61: 1-2)

No form of Christian spirituality can evade this prophetic ministry under any pretext. Vision of God is at the same time a

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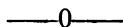
11. Cassian, *Conferences 17*, quoted in L. Bouyer, *op. cit.* p. 318

vision of man. This is not to fall into any cheap humanism, As Fr. Staniloë, a contemporary Orthodox theologian puts it "the more God is God, the more man is man." The greater we discover the transcendent dimension of our spirituality, the deeper we realize our own humanity.

## Conclusion

The Christian Tradition does not consider justice in society as an end itself. Justice, love and reconciliation in the world are signs that signify the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is neither totally this-worldly nor totally other-worldly, but enfolds both. The vocation of Christian spirituality is to transfigure the present reality so that the whole creation is enabled to enter into the higher and infinite possibilities of existence which the Creator God has bestowed on it. In the Christian Tradition God is understood as a community, the ineffable community of Trinity—the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. The human vocation is to participate in this community. As every individual carries in him the image of God, the whole humanity collectively is the image of the Triune God. Our spirituality down here on earth should strive primarily to realize more and more this corporate image of humanity as the unique reflection of the divine community.

The spiritual yearning of individual and communities breaks open "this closed secular world, deprived of any valid symbols of hope and transcendence"<sup>12</sup> and makes history meaningful. We see history not only as darkened by injustice, oppression and all other forms of evil, but also as bearing the seeds of resurrection and transfiguration.




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12. Paul Gregorios, "Does Jesus Christ free and unite,"  
*The Ecumenical Review*, (Jan, 1975) p. 45.

# Orthodox Monasteries in Russia

The Ecumenical (Potestant-Catholic) Press bulletin of France (BIP) published this Spring the following information about monasteries and convents in the Soviet Union:

There are today 6 monasteries with about 220 monks, and 11 women's convents with about a 1000 nuns. The main ones are :

1. **The Lavra of the Holy Trinity** (and St. Sergius) in Zagorsk, 70 kilometers from Moscow, has 51 monks and two novices. It also houses five churches, a large theological seminary, and a post-graduate theological academy. Every year some 50,000 pilgrims visit Zagorsk.
2. **The Monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin** (12 kilometers from the southern port city of Odessa) has some 40 monks. The Seminary of Odessa is also located here.
3. **The Monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin** in Jirovitsy (in Bylorussia, between Minsk and Brest-Litovsk) has only 15 monks. It has also now some 45 nuns. This is also a great pilgrimage centre.
- 4 **Petcherskaia Lavra** (near Pskov) has played a major role in the history of Russian Orthodoxy since the 15th century. It encompasses 6 church buildings. There are 66 monks and 5 nuns. The annual feast on August 28th draws some 30,000 believers.
5. **The Potchaeff Lavra** (near Kamenetz) has been having troubles. In 1959 it had 142 monks. In 1975 the number was 43. Now—not known.
6. **The Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Vilna** (Lithuania) has a men's community of 8 monks and a women's community of 18 or perhaps more nuns.
7. The two Convents of Kiev (Capital of Ukraine) have 106 monks and 26 novices in one (community of the Resurrection) and 104 sisters and 59 novices in the other (Pokrov).

8. **The Convent of the Nativity in Alexandrova** (near Odessa) has some 50 sisters of various nationalities, Moldavian, Turkmen, Bulgarian, Ukrainian and Russian.

9. **The Convent of the Resurrection at Chumalevsky** (sub-carpathia) has some 40 sisters.

10. **The Convent of St. Nicolas in Mukacevo** is not far from the above and has some 122 nuns.

11. **The Convent of the Holy Trinity of Koretsk** (Volynia) has 142 sisters and some novices.

12. **The Convent of the Resurrection at Zansky** has 68 nuns.

13. **The Convent of the Robe of the Virgin** in Zolotonosha has 85 sisters.

14. Two Convents in Riga have some 50 sisters each.

15. **Convent of the Dormition in Estonia**, has more than 100 nuns, cultivating a collective farm of 86 hectares.

# News & Views

## I. The Pope's Health

In June Pope John Paul II was still in hospital, and the medical bulletin dated June 30th, issued by the nine doctors attending His Holiness says: "the normal course of the Holy Father's illness continues, though with some slight occasional rises in temperature due to the cyto-megalo-virus infection. The patient's general condition is progressively improving. The haematological, biochemical and radiological examinations confirm the favourable progress of the clinical situation". The Pope left Agostino Gesnelli Polyclinic on Friday, 14th August. The surgical wound is well healed according to the doctors. His Holiness is to convalesce till the end of September.

—*Osservatore Romano*

## II. Food News

### (1) *U. S. Blocks Food gift to Vietnam.*

The U. S. government has refused to give the Mennonite Central Committee permission to ship 250 tons of wheat donated by Kansas farmers to Vietnam. Vietnam is facing a two million ton food shortage this year that could cause starvation. The U. S. decision was defended on the grounds that Vietnam is capable of handling the situation, as witnessed by its ability to maintain an army in Kampuchea. The decision was criticized on grounds that the government should not interfere with private humanitarian aid distribution.

(*Bread for The World.*)

### (2) *U. S. Aids China.*

Two provinces of China, one suffering from drought and the other from floods, are due to receive 20,000 tons of wheat from the United States, Japan and the Common Market. Weather is held largely responsible for a significant drop in grain production in China from 332 million tons in 1979 to 318 million tons in 1980.

(*Bread for The World.*)

### (3) *World Food Production Up.*

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, world grain crops will be larger this year than last. Recent favourable weather has led to higher projections for this year's crop. But due to increased consumption, world grain stocks are still expected to drop by 16 percent. World grain imports will reach a record level of 204 million tons with *the bulk of the increase accounted for by the developing countries*. The low-income developing countries alone are expected to import 41 million tons, a figure that represents a doubling of imports since the early 1970s. About 18 percent of these imports will be covered by food aid.

(*Bread for The World*)



#### (4) *Population Growth Down; Infant Mortality Up.*

According to the United Nations, world population growth is slowing down and will not reach levels earlier anticipated. Part of the slow-down appears to be due to rising infant mortality rates in developing countries, reversing a long-term historic trend toward lower rates.

*(Bread for The World)*

#### (5) *Infant Formula.*

The United States was the only country to vote against an infant formula code at a May 21 meeting of the World Health Organization. The code governs the promotion and marketing of infant formula. Infant formula companies have been accused of selling formula in areas of the world where it cannot be used properly, leading to the death of many infants. Two top officials of the Agency for International Development (AID) resigned to protest the administration vote. Four congressional hearings on the issue were scheduled for June. Possible legislative follow-up is being investigated by infant formula activists.

*(Bread for The World)*

### **III. Celebrations Mark Sixteen Hundredth Anniversary of Second Ecumenical Council**

Istanbul (EPS)—Celebrations have taken place in Istanbul marking the sixteen hundredth anniversary of the second ecumenical council of Constantinople.

At Istanbul, where the confession of faith known as the "Creed of Nicea-Constantinople" was formulated in 381, the Ecumenical Patriarch, Demetrios I, invited representatives of Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant and Anglican Churches of many countries to commemorate this event, from 5-7 June 1981. Various liturgical celebrations were a feature of these days.

Patriarch Demetrios I, during one of his addresses, reminded participants that the "Creed" of Christians, the principal work of the second ecumenical council, "had envisaged a united humanity acknowledging and glorifying God". But, he added, "we Christians have failed in this great call; we must now confess it with sincerity and humility". He had invited Christians on this occasion "to gather together, in a self-critical way and to acknowledge their responsibility towards the Christian, non-Christian and atheist worlds".

The World Council of Churches was represented at these celebrations by the General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Philip Pottar, who acknowledged the significant role "the ecumenical patriarchate and the sister Orthodox Churches have played . . . in making the Nicea-Constantinople Creed understood in its depth by the whole Christian family".

Alluding to the famous “filioque” clause, a source of division between the Western and Eastern church traditions, Dr. Potter said: “In the WCC we have carried out a wide ranging study of this Creed, and we are hopeful that the churches will now restore it to its original form and so make a further step towards confessing our common faith together”. (EPS)

#### **IV. First Internaitonal Dialogue for Hindus and Christians**

Rajpur, North India (EPS)—The understanding of justice as it relates to the search for community; the problem of caste as a basis of social order; the place of women in society, and the changing role of religious beliefs were the main subjects under discussion at an international Hindu-Christian meeting here, 30 May—6 June.

The meeting, held at the Christian Retreat and Study Centre, Rajpur, was sponsored by the World Council of Churches’ (WCC) sub-unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies (DFI) in cooperation with the National Council of Churches of India, the Orthodox Church in India and the Church of North India. It brought together Christians and Hindus mainly from India but also from many parts of the world such as South Africa, Kenya, Trinidad, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia, Europe and the USA, where people of the two faiths live as neighbours in substantial numbers. Representatives of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India also took part in the discussions.

The Rajpur meeting was significant as it was the first international Hindu-Christian meeting of its kind although the sub-unit has facilitated local Hindu-Christian meetings in the past.

The meeting dealt with the theme “Religious Resources for a Just Society”. Among the topics included under this theme were: the understanding of justice in the two traditions and the way this understanding works out in society; the use and misuse of religious beliefs in binding and maintaining social structures, and the spiritual foundations of the search for a just society.

The Rajpur meeting included visits to Hardwar, in order that participants could experience for themselves popular Hinduism, and to the Sivananda Ashram at Rishikesh as the guest of the Swami Chiddhananda who was himself a participant in the dialogue meeting.

The meetings were jointly moderated by Dr. Stanley J. Samartha, Bangalore, formerly director of the DFI, and Dr. Seshagiri Rao of the University of Virginia, USA. (EPS)

# THE ORTHODOX CHURCHMAN'S DIARY

1982

(NINTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION)

- A Small Directory of the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East.
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